

SEMINAR ON WORKPLACE HEALTH PROMOTION IN CYPRUS

Cyprus is one of the new EU Member States that joined recently the European Network of Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP), as a partner.

The Department of Labour Inspection of the Cyprus Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance is the National Focal Point for the Network's activities. Under this capacity it participates in the Network's various projects, aiming to develop a national infrastructure for workplace health promotion. To this effect, following a roundtable meeting within the framework of the Dragon-Fly project, held in Nicosia last December, a seminar on workplace health promotion was organized by the Department of Labour Inspection, which took place on the 25th of May 2006, in Nicosia with an aim to discuss the future development of workplace health promotion in Cyprus.

In this seminar almost 50 participants were present. Among them, there were employer's representatives, mainly Safety Officers from companies coming from various sectors of the Cyprus economic activity, representatives from the Department of Labour Inspection and the Department of Social Insurance of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, from the Ministry of Health, the Employer's and Employee's Organizations, the Cyprus National Institute for the Environment and Public Health as well as representatives from other associations.

The Occupational Physician of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, Dr Athanasios Athanasiou, who represents the National Focal point in the Network, chaired the Seminar. A welcome introduction was given by the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance Mr. Christos Taliadoros, who stressed the importance of the concept of workplace health promotion as well as the necessity to introduce it to the Cyprus community.

The first part of this seminar included presentations from two experts invited from the ENWHP, i.e Dr. Alfons Schroer, Head of the Department of Health from BKK Germany, who introduced the idea of workplace health promotion and the ENWHP activities and Dr Vwe Brandenburg, Head of Ergonomics, Volkswagen AG, who introduced the health management example at this company. The next presentation was made by Dr Athanasiou, who explained the forthcoming health surveillance system of employed persons in Cyprus and the future plans in relation to the workplace health promotion activities.

The second part of the seminar included presentations from various stakeholders, who presented examples of good practices relevant to workplace health promotion in the Cyprus Community. Presentations were given from Ms Christina Vasila from the Employers and Industrialists Federation of Cyprus, Mr Theodoulos Makrigiannis from the Cyprus Telecommunication's Authority, Dr Elpidoforos Sotiriades from the Cyprus Institute on the Environment and Public Health and Mr Mimis Theodotou from the Cyprus Union of Bank Employees.

After the presentations a discussion took place between the participants and some ideas were expressed on the future steps needed for the implementation of workplace health promotion activities in Cyprus. Among them was the creation of a

working group from various stakeholders coordinated by the Labour Inspectorate, which will try to develop supporting infrastructure (National Forum on Workplace Health Promotion) and the establishment of health awards, nominated by the Labour Inspectorate to companies, which will invest on workplace health promotion.

Conclusively this seminar was very successful. All participants agreed that the support of all players is needed in order to achieve the goal for introducing workplace health promotion activities into the Cyprus workplaces. To this effect the Department of Labour Inspection is now preparing an action plan in order to gain the support of all stakeholders and determine the next steps to be jointly shared towards the implementation of good health promotion practices at workplace.